

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's OTHER Newspaper



LINK SNAPPED AS BR SHUT STATION

Members of Hackney Public Transport Action Committee were banned from Broad Street Station on Thursday 24 May. The long fight against the closure of Broad Street and Dalston Junction took another turn as HPTAC tried to give out the latest in a series of information leaflets telling passengers of British Rail's latest closure plans. British Transport police moved the HPTAC members on.

The leaflets informed passengers of their legal right to object to the closure. HPTAC Chairperson

Roger Lansdown, stated: "We were surprised that BR were against this although I suppose experience should have led us to expect it. BR are not too good at telling people about services they do run-- they must be even worse at telling them of those they don't want to run."

According to platform staff at the station, however, BR's attempt to prevent passengers receiving the leaflets was not successful. HPTAC members stood on the street near all the entrances and most people waiting on the platforms

could be seen busily reading their leaflets.

As in the past, passengers appeared very appreciative of HPTAC's efforts. Many of them thanked HPTAC members, saying it was the only way they ever managed to find out what BR was intending to do with their stations.

BR have for some time been threatening to close Broad Street and the eastern section of the North London line, as part of their plans to redevelop Liverpool Street Station. The site on which Broad Street presently stands is wanted to provide a site on which a large office development can be placed, the revenues from this being intended to finance the consequent development of Liverpool Street.

Viable

This plan has now been made viable by the GLC's decision to fund the diversion of North London Line trains from Broad Street to North Woolwich, from May 1985. BR published the closure notices for the section of line between Broad Street and Dalston Junction, which includes both Broad Street and Dalston Junction stations, on May 11, as a result of this.

This plan will prove disastrous for the future of the North London Line as a whole. It will deprive Hackney of its main rail

service to the City, but will have much more far-reaching consequences than this. Twenty per cent of the existing users of the line presently go into Broad Street. On diversion, this source of patronage will be lost. On top of this the line along which the North London Line trains are to be diverted to North Woolwich (the 'Crosstown Linkline') is currently losing in excess of £500,000 per annum - these losses will be thrown onto the North London Line upon diversion. The North London Line itself presently just about breaks even.

The financial position of the line will thus be very precarious if the GLC and BR get their way, threatening the future of a unique piece of public transport. The effects of this on Hackney are likely to be very severe. Not only will it lose the rail link between Dalston and the City, but the diverted service will probably not be as good as the one we have now. A member of HPTAC has been told unofficially that the Richmond North Woolwich service will, like the present Crosstown

Continued on page 8.



WORLD RECORD BROKEN! The World Record for non-stop improvisation was broken by Rob West of Experience Theatre on 21 May when he did mime, juggling, joke-telling and general lunacy for 18 hours on behalf of the Save Hackney Campaign. His name will now appear in the Guinness Book of Records.

COAL, THE NATION'S ENERGY FUTURE
SAVE IT WITH THEM

VICTORY TO THE MINERS

Thousands of pounds have now been donated by the people of Hackney to the National Union of Mineworkers strike funds as the dispute enters its third month. The response has been truly staggering, with even members of the Unemployed Centre making a collection. The local Labour Parties are both actively collecting the 50p per week levy which has been asked for nationally and many trade unions and other political organisations are also raising money. Miners and NUM leaders from a number of areas have spoken in Hackney and all over London and have had a magnificent reception.

With real hardship being faced by miners and their families as the strike goes on, every gift of money or food is vital. If the solidarity between the miners and the millions of working people who support them is maintained then they will win their fight -against both McGregor and the Tories.

HACKNEY PEACE WEEK



In the run up to the Euro-elections and Reagan's visit to CND this month, May 26th - June 2nd was designated Hackney Peace Week by CND. Events included a Street Ballot on Trident in Stoke Newington High Street, an Ecumenical Service for Peace, a public meeting on 'Europe and Disarmament', a special evening of films at the Rio and a Cabaret Evening at the Crown and Castle. As well as the CND organised events, there was a four day Women's Peace Camp set up by Hackney Greenham Women outside Hackney Town Hall in Mare Street, with Greenham Common-style benders, a visit from the Women's Peace Bus and a puppet show, to demonstrate solidarity with the women at Greenham Common, who are experiencing amount of arrests and harassment, and to bring Greenham Common's protest into London.

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Journalism gone crazy?



Dear HPP,

Your disappointment at the defeat of your old school pal Anthony Kendall in the elections for the leadership of Hackney Borough Council (HPP 101) has finally forced Hackney People's Press to distort facts in an attempt to make them conform both to your feelings of loss and your erroneous prediction in the previous issue that Kendall not only would win the election but that he would not even face a 'serious opponent'.

One does not have to be trained in content analysis to have noticed how over the past few months you have reported or commented on your own and Anthony Kendall's wishes as if they were the actual political reality.

When realities refused to conform to your express wishes you then attempt to distort the facts to suit previously expressed wishes.

For the last year I was virtually the only open critic of Anthony Kendall's leadership on the Council and weekly exposed his fake left politics like his and Peter Kahn's role in the SAS style union-busting activity at the St John's Area Base. Yet you dismiss this in a few words as throwing banana skins in the leadership's direction and accuse me of stirring up anti-traveller hysteria.

When I revealed that vital decisions affecting the people of Hackney were being taken, behind the backs of both the Labour Councillors and the Labour Party, at private meetings in Kendall's home you described me as displaying 'much paranoia'.

When I produced proof of these meetings and you were forced to retract you did so (HPP 100) in a manner calculated to cover

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letters

the seriousness of the point being made and at the same time suppress a story which showed the role of Anthony Kendall in harassing travellers in both Hammersmith and Hackney. The story which you suppressed came from your own reporter who had heard a tape of Anthony Kendall confessing to this role.

Thus with the political realities of Hackney distorted to fit in with your wishes, you could declare:

"Right at the top however there is a firmly (sic) painted sign, No Vacancy. Anyone who is expecting to get Council Leader Anthony Kendall's job is going to be disappointed, and there are no serious contenders." (Inside Left, HPP 100)

When the Annual Borough Conference refused to conform with this wishful trend thinking you hit back with a hysterical and inaccurate account of the Conference. Thus where your friend Anthony had been described as 'Council Leader' Hilda Kean in your columns is described as the new 'boss'.

My accounted for absence, from the Conference--the meeting was on a Saturday, I work for a Sunday newspaper-- is reported as unaccountably absent'.

The left slate is described at the "so-called left slate". The political lines taken by both the Hackney Federation of Tenants Associations and the Direct Labour Organisation Manual Workers are ignored.

Delegates at the Conference from Labour Parties are transferred in your mind and on your pages to an 'unaffiliated union' so that your report can confirm your myth that the Town Hall bureaucrats were against Kendall and the proletarian workers in favour.

This is journalism gone crazy. Cllr Gery Lawless, Town Hall

PS. You can tell your amiable pothead of a source that I am in heaven as a result of the Conference and if he is not, the lesson he should learn is not to attempt to ride two horses at the same time. Particularly when they are going in opposite directions.

HPP COMMENTS:

- No member of the HPP collective went to school with Anthony Kendall.
- Our Inside Left correspondent has been sentenced to a forced diet of readings from the Dublin Sunday World for his failure to predict the council leadership struggle correctly.

WEEK OF EVENTS LAUNCHES OPENING OF DALSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT

Snake is Star!

A ten foot python was the star attraction at a week-long programme of events to celebrate the opening of Dalston Community Centre Project in May. "The crowd went wild", said Merville A. Bishop, Events Organiser. Besides the snake dancing, by Nana Asantewah, there was African and Indian dancing, a computer exhibition, feminist drama and films among other activities. TV celebrity Juliet Alexander and boxer Maurice Hope made guest appearances.

The opening of the Centre, at 62a Montague Road, is the result of six years' planning by local residents. The germ of the idea for a community centre occurred when the nearby roads were declared a Housing Action Area in 1979. The residents, who formed the association known as S.A.H.A.R.A., bought the Beth Hamadresh synagogue for about £86,000. The building, which had lain empty for about seven years, was paid for with LBH Housing Dept. Underspend money.

The Project was scheduled to open last year, but asbestos tiles were discovered in the main part of the synagogue only a week before the opening ceremony, so celebrations had to be postponed until May of this year.

In the long term it is hoped that the main building will house most of the activities, leaving the small hall as a nursery for occasional use.

ACTIVITIES

Two co-ordinators, Paula Grant and Tina Lord are permanently employed by the Project. Tina said that day to day activities would include a girls and young women's project, a youth club, playgroup, senior citizens' and a black over 50s group. They are also hoping to provide ILEA classes.

The Project successfully organized jumble sales and a street festival last year. A playscheme was also held last August.

The Dalston Community Centre Project, having got off to such a lively start, appears to have a promising future.

STAINED GLASS

Just five minutes' walk from Ridley Road market, the building has an Eastern-style appearance, with its flat roof and arched windows. Unusually for a synagogue, the windows seem to have stained glass which on closer inspection proves to be a colourful mural by Art Attack. But the themes depicted are community, not religious ones. The interior is spacious, with a balcony and graceful pillars.

ANNEX

An annex of the building has been completely rehabilitated to provide a hall and stage, as well as a kitchen and a garden.

RENT OFFICE PICKET

Some Hackney tenants are so concerned at the high level of rents currently being fixed by the Rent Officer that they staged a picket of the Rent Office in Mare Street last month. The tenants, from Hackney Housing Associations, wanted to highlight what they see as a lack of public accountability of the Rent Assessment Panel.

ANGRY

The tenants, from Sam Lewis, New Islington & Hackney and John Groom Housing Associations "have been angry for a long time" said Terry Robinson, chair of the Federation of Hackney Tenants' Associations. They decided to take action after the Rent Officer fixed a "fair" rent higher than that which the landlord, a Housing Association, had requested. The tenant concerned appealed, and found that

his rent was increased still further, although "service" charges were slightly reduced.

The tenants question the need for rent to increase every year like a commodity subject to market forces. They aim to draw attention to the way "fair" rents are assessed, and are demanding a full statement of the criteria used by the Rent Assessment Panel.

PROFIT

Terry Robinson said "the Rent Officer is supposed to be independent, yet the policy has changed since the present government was elected".

The Panel has stated that it has a duty to ensure that a landlord receives a profit from their investment. Yet Housing Associations are registered charities, and as such are declared non-profit-making. They are therefore in breach of the Charities Act.

The Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations is supporting the demand for a National campaign against the present arrangement, and is calling upon the NFHA to support it. The Hackney tenants have contacted other Housing Associations across the country, and there are moves for a London-wide campaign.

They are making proposals to Hackney Council to demand that the Rent Officer provides statistical reports on the levels of rent increase in Hackney. At the moment Hackney Council pays for the Rent Office but has no control over it.

SUPPORT

Both Hackney MPs support the tenants' demands and have written to Sir George Young to ask for an explanation for the Rent Officer's decision. So far, replies have merely confirmed that Rent Officers are acting under Government instruction.

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Under new managers

The occupation by tenants and workers at the St John's Area Maintenance Base could lead to the establishment of a new structure of management of all Hackney's tenant services. This is the exciting prospect which is now being negotiated by the new leadership of the Council with the unions and the Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations. The leader, Hilda Kean, her deputy, Andrew Puddephat and the chair of housing, John Bloom, have been given special executive powers to negotiate and establish such a scheme. Andrew Puddephat described their mission as the "most important thing that faces this council."

It is expected that a special project team of officers will be established to set up this new structure after all the staff from the base have returned to work. The Fed has reluctantly agreed to end its occupation to allow the officers in.

A last minute backlash by reactionary elements in the



Housing Services Directorate to bring the whole Directorate out in dispute failed when the executive of Hackney NALGO refused to back them. There has always been an under-current of prejudice against the Fed and TAs which support it which goes back many years.

A mass meeting of tenants to be held after this issue of HPP goes to press is to

be asked to confirm the Fed and the unions' arrangements with the Council leadership. It looks at last as though spontaneous and united action between tenants and council workers has broken the stranglehold on progress towards real control which the middle level Council bureaucracy has blocked for years.

Afia expelled by Tory racism



Yet another East London victim of Britain's racist immigration laws was bundled out of Britain early in May. Afia Begum came to Britain in 1982, three months after the death of her husband Abdul, who died in a mysterious fire in Brick Lane. Afia and their child Asma had been given leave to live in Britain permanently before Abdul's death. Yet when she arrived, she was first refused entry and then allowed only temporary entry, despite the fact that many of her family live here also, including her father.

She had been in hiding for more than a year, supported by a group of Asian women called the Sari Squad. Eventually the police tracked her down and, within three days, and despite protests from

MPs and Euro-MPs from both Britain and Holland she had been put forcibly on a flight to Bangladesh.

The Sari Squad have been touring Europe with a number of supporters since Afia's deportation, speaking in Paris, Amsterdam and Bonn before going to the European Parliament in Strasbourg at the end of May. Meanwhile the Tory Government has continued its policy of talks with the world's leading racists by inviting South African premier P.W. Botha here in early June.

The Afia Begum Campaign and the Sari Squad can be contacted c/o Box 22, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.

Causes of Aggro

Along with everything else, Hackney people suffer from Vandalism and Racial Harassment. We all know that it takes place, the graffiti on the estate walls, the phone box that does not work, abuse and even violence against ethnic minorities.

Why does this happen? Why do we allow it to happen? Can anything be done about it? Is more policing the solution?

Two new reports prepared for The Greater London Council Police Committee called "Vandalism in London" and "Racial Harassment in London" contain plenty of information, ideas and answers - although they sometimes get lost among the mass of type.

The report on racial harassment is the more detailed and includes a horrifying account of attacks on minorities, some committed by the police themselves. It is particularly informative on harassment on housing estates in neighbouring Tower Hamlets. No surprises here for regular HPP readers and the many Hackney residents who have their own experience of harassment.

Just as worrying is the Police RESPONSE to attacks: delays in arriving, reluctance to investigate or to prosecute when the attackers are known, the tendency to treat black victims as criminals, etc.

As housing officials and the Police fail to curb the extreme right by prosecuting for incitement to racial hatred or deal with the perpetrators of racial harassment, a climate is created where such activities are encouraged by the authorities failure to show that such behaviour is unacceptable.

The police even refused to

give evidence for the GLC report. As they conclude: Policing racial harassment still appears to enjoy a low priority in overall police policy, and a low status in the occupational culture of the officers who ought to be dealing with it. These two elements form an intractable problem which is quite separate from the harassment routinely dispensed by the minority of hard core racists in the force.

Vandalism was seen as arising from general social and economic pressures under which people live, lack of facilities and jobs etc. The role of the police should be seen as a last resort, more policing is not an easy answer to the problem.

Vandalism consists largely of an accumulation of innumerable rather petty incidents, the main result of which is to impoverish the environment. One person commented that living in a concrete jungle people get so fed up and depressed that they seem to give up and they do not even talk to each other, no one seems to care in the end.

Badly designed estates with few facilities, no future prospects, alienation, apathy, vandalism, even worse estates; an all too familiar pattern which can lead to racial problems as well.

The following quote is from "Recommended improvements to Ocean Estate-a plan for action"

The poor service for repairs and maintenance was the greatest single cause for dissatisfaction. The anger and frustration which many tenants express towards the repairs service often spills over into their attitudes towards the estate in general and their

feelings towards other tenants and neighbours...This has serious implications for social harmony with some tenants choosing to blame the newer residents and especially the Asian families for the decline which has resulted in fact from deteriorating standards in maintenance. A responsive and efficient repairs service will make a very real contribution to good neighbour relations and greatly improve tenant satisfaction...

Both GLC reports go on to make further recommendations and are available (free) to Londoners/London organisations from the GLC Police Committee Support Unit, Room 602, County Hall, SE1 7PB.

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The Stoke Newington and Hackney Defence Campaign has reported that Cirrus Noor, the campaign member who was jailed for two years for possessing paraffin bombs at Bethnal Green police station, has been sectioned (certified insane) under section 47 of the 1980 Mental Health Act. Noor was due for release from Wandsworth prison in 6 months, but can now be held indefinitely in a prison mental hospital.

Last November, while Noor was on remand at Pentonville prison, witnesses say that he was attacked by several prison officers after a

visit. His trial was delayed for a week, say the Defence Campaign, to give Noor's bruises time to heal. He was also pressured by prison psychiatrists to take the drug Largactil, a "liquid cosh".

The Defence Campaign is fighting to have Cirrus Noor de-sectioned, and is trying to have an independent psychiatrist visit him. They are also asking people to send letters of support to Cirrus Noor, c/o HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Rd, SW18 and to protest to the Home Office Prison Department, 89 Ecclestone Square, SW1.

You can't afford to miss an issue of Marxism Today

In June 1983, just before the election, *Marxism Today* published a major interview with Neil Kinnock, on Thatcherism, the decline of the Left, and the need for renewal in the Labour Party.

In October 1983 we carried Eric Hobsbawm's article on Labour's Lost Millions, which sparked a debate that is still raging.

In January 1984 David Edgar contributed his visionary essay on 1997, which devastatingly illustrated how Thatcherism might develop.

In April 1984 Bea Campbell's 'How the Other Half Lives' brilliantly demolished many of the Left's myths about the labour movement.

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Bonjour de Hackney

The latest outing for the Lea View House Road Show was to Paris. In April six tenants, three architects, two housing officers and the then deputy leader of Hackney Council went to give a lecture spreading the word that participation and new working relationships between politicians, professionals and tenants really can work.

The invitation to lecture at that cathedral of high-tech modernism, the Pompidou Centre, came as a result of a visit to Lea View last year by the French equivalent of the housing association movement, who responded enthusiastically to the message of the project.

WORTH IT

Dolly Pritchard and Brenda Nutley (Chair and Treasurer of the Tenants Association) are convinced that it was worth every minute of the considerable amount of time that they, and all the other tenants, have spent on the project -- and Dolly now hopes that the message can be spread far and wide so that other tenants can benefit as well. "If we hadn't fought like we did, and if we hadn't been involved in everything, we would never have got the place as good as it is. Now we've got to use our knowledge of how we did it to go out and help

NO VANDALS

Eddie and Marianne Joseph are expecting their first child in the Autumn. Eddie thinks that the new Lea View "is the best thing since sliced bread. There's a much better community spirit about the place now, we all know our neighbours and we keep an eye on each others' places, there's no vandalism anymore and the fuel bills are so low that this year we can even afford to go away for a holiday."

ARCHITECTS

John Thompson, one of the architects, is convinced that the decision to move their project office onto the estate was fundamental to the ultimate success of the project. "If past generations of architects had started their training with a year or two at Lea View, looking, listening and learning, rather than with five years locked away in the rarefied atmosphere of a School of Architecture, we might have been spared the appalling mistakes perpetrated by our profession during the 60s and 70s, mistakes which have now effectively condemned thousands

of people to a life of appalling squalor and hopelessness, trapped in our inner city slums."

STRENGTHS

Housing Officer Dick Head, who was responsible for untangling the bureaucratic complications generated by the rolling programme, said: "For the first time I was given full responsibility for all the diverse tasks that had been previously undertaken by all the different sections in the Housing Department. The tenants at last found themselves relating directly to just one person, based right on their estate, and once they realised that I really did have the authority to get things done, our relationship went from strength to strength."

MOTIVATION

The building work is being carried out by Hackney's own Direct Labour Organisation. "The direct relationship that exists between the tenants and the workforce has produced a high level of motivation on the site and the standard of workmanship has been excellent," said Cllr Peter Kahn, chair of the Public Services Committee.

LEA VALLEY RAMBLES

What could be pleasanter on a warm, sunny evening in May than a stroll down by the river - with the thought of a pint at the end? Obviously it was a notion that appealed to a good many people, for forty to fifty turned up for the first in this year's series of walks round the Lee Valley.

The walk, organised by the Hackney Lee Valley Forum, started, somewhat belatedly

from the Prince of Wales pub on the Lea Bridge Road. It took the walkers along the Hackney Cut, then around the Middlesex filter beds - long disused and now silted up and full of willows and rushes (the Thames Water Authority, although it does not want to do anything with the beds, resolutely refuses to let anyone else do something with them either). The walk then tacked back across the Lea Bridge Road to Millfields north side. Members of the forum led the walk, telling us as we went along about the history of the region and the ideas they had come up with for various parts of the valley.

The forum is still concerned with what the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is planning for the area. Its plans concentrate more on building centres for sports and so on -- admittedly needed in Hackney, but not so much as open space is and the RHA does not seem to have any ideas on developing the park as a whole.

Further walks will be run each Thursday until 28 June, starting at 7.00pm from the Prince of Wales on the Lea Bridge Road. Everyone is welcome to go along and put their own suggestions too.

EURO-ELECTION

In case you hadn't noticed, or maybe have been trying not to notice, the European Parliament elections are on June 14 this year. Does anyone really care? Maybe very few, but perhaps we ought to...

Hackney is part of the London North-East constituency, currently represented by Alf Lomas of the Labour party. As he says, "The problem is that there is far too much money spent on subsidising rich farmers and not enough on helping inner city areas such as ours."

Alf Lomas is particularly concerned about the plight of pensioners. The single pension in Great Britain is only 24% of the average

national wage, in France and Germany it is about half the national average, while Belgium manages 60%. "The British Government say that they cannot afford to give pensioners a decent pension, yet they spend seventeen billion pounds a year on armaments."

But for the Labour Party the election is not just about the common market, but "the first opportunity since the general election for people to show what they thought of the Tory Government's attacks on the GLC, on Trades Unions, on ethnic minorities, on pensioners, on the health services, and their creation of mass unemployment. It is an opportunity not to be missed".

If you want to know more about the Labour party policies two public meetings are being held in this area: Wed 6 June - York Hall, Old Ford Rd, near Bethnal Green Tube, at 7.30pm. Speakers include Tony Benn and Peter Shore.

Fri 8 June - Kingsland School Shacklewell Lane, at 8pm. Speakers include Ken Livingstone, Ernie Roberts and Brian Sedgemore.

Britain's "Green" party, the Ecology party is only contesting 15 seats but one of these is London NE where Jean Lambert is the candidate. Her particular interests include education, CND and Civil Liberties.

The Ecology party is against the EEC because it is fundamentally uncological and is failing to tackle the many serious problems that exist in Europe. They see the EEC as an undemocratic, short sighted monster in which national interest overrides international survival.

Their manifesto "Towards a Green Europe" is worth a read (cost 30p). Further information from the Ecology Party Office, 36-38 Clapham Road, SW9 0JQ Tel 735 2485.

No doubt the pro-europe Conservatives and Liberal Alliance will be standing also, but as we go to press we don't have any information available on them...

KEAN PLANS

New Council leader Hilda Kean's speech to the Annual Council Meeting, where the inauguration of the new Mayor takes place, was a forthright summary of the direction she plans to follow in taking the Council's campaigns to the people.

She began by outlining the serious position that Hackney Council is in. Following the attacks on the living standards of working people a strategy of liquidating opposition to the economic measures by the erosion of civil liberties and democratic structures. To a local authority, the most serious threat was posed by rate-capping. "Our function," she said, "will be merely to implement Tory policy which itself has been rejected by Hackney people."

After quoting George Lansbury, who fifty years ago had led a socialist campaign against a Tory attack on an East London council, she said: "The Tories are still plotting to overthrow Labour majorities and socialist sites



of opposition to their diktats. They still haven't succeeded and nor will they while the Labour movement mounts a determined, united opposition to their policies. In building such opposition in Hackney we realise that we have clearly to show that what we can change we will change and what we cannot change we will fight alongside them to change."

She concluded by saying that the mood of the Labour movement was not defeatist but buoyant, there was willingness to organise against the Government's proposals. "Unless the Government recognises the real needs of Hackney people, we will have to organise a campaign that will lead us into confrontation. This time let's make sure that Hackney wins."

Next month, HPP will be carrying a detailed interview with Hilda Kean.

KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU

An attempt to set up a neighbourhood watch scheme in Mapledene, a 'posh' area of Hackney, bounded by Holly Street, Albion Square and London Fields, involved the residents of Mapledene being misled "by a conscious trail of lies and of deception", according to a recently published report.

The report, entitled 'Mapledene Crime Survey: An appraisal' was written by Cllr. Brynley Heaven, Chair of the Police Committee, and distributed to the ward councillors for the area, organisations concerned with the police, and the local press. The material is drawn from a longer report published by the Police Foundation, a self-styled 'independent research charity.'

SURVEY

The report tells the story of a survey of Mapledene Residents conducted by their Residents' Association, who had been app-



roached by the police with a view to setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the area (council tenants were almost entirely excluded): of these 311 responded. However the questionnaire, which was launched with great trumpeting in the 'Hackney Gazette' as an attempt to prove that the real 'Mr. and Mrs. Hackney' had no worries about policing methods in Hackney, and had questions exploring the attitudes to the police, crime and Neighbourhood Watch of the Mapledene Residents produced disappointing results for the police: only 39% of respondents (20% of residents) were prepared to give the police any positive rating at all (even 'fairly good for you'). Furthermore, when the Chairperson of the Residents' Association, Simon Harris, handed over the questionnaires to the Police Foundation (although it was promised on the questionnaire that only the overall findings would be handed to any outside body) the questionnaire itself was declared invalid in the questions it asked, the audience it was sent to, and the biased covering letter which accompanied it.

HUSHED UP

These results, claims Cllr. Heaven's report, were so embarrassing both to the Police

and the Residents' Association that they were hushed up even from the Mapledene Residents themselves: at the Association's AGM on Friday May 4th most of the meeting was given over to a presentation by the police on Neighbourhood Watch; the Police Foundation's report on the survey was unavailable to residents; Simon Harris even attempted to bolster the credibility of the survey under questioning, by referring to the Police Foundation only as 'independent professionals' --though it was these 'independent professionals' who had condemned the survey!

Cllr. Heaven's report calls into question many aspects of the whole Mapledene episode. First of all it questions the survey itself, which, while claiming to explore the attitudes of residents, was constructed to prove a political point, (and was presumably sent to those residents most likely to confirm that point - hence the exclusion of council tenants and the use of the expression 'heads of households').

MCCARTHYISM

Dissatisfaction with the questionnaire was evident from the comments written in the margins, which ranged from confusion ('What does this mean?') to mistrust of 'Council interference' to suspicion of the whole concept of Neighbourhood Watch and accusations of 'McCarthyism' and 'unscrupulous policing methods'.

CONFIDENCE BREACHED

Secondly the report questions Simon Harris's handling of the whole affair. It is common in non-elected organisations for an individual to exercise disproportionate control: Cllr. Heaven sees the handing of the questionnaires to the Police Foundation in the first place as a breach of confidence, and the subsequent covering up and distortion of its findings as

a deliberate manipulation of Mapledene Residents.

If all this is the case, it is ironic that the abuses committed to prove a political point failed even to prove that point, and that the 'independent body' that condemned it is composed of researchers and serving police officers researching into the viability of Sir Kenneth Newman's policing methods in London, with the Prince of Wales as its president; a far cry from the community based police monitoring organisations which might have been expected to condemn the survey, and are the sort of organisations whose activities the survey was intended to undermine.

have fewer grievances against them than in many parts of Hackney. As the report puts it: "It is reasonable to guess that things are even worse in less favoured adjoining areas and amongst non-respondents."

life in areas like Hackney'. The Stoke Newington Survey on public attitudes towards policing, out of which Newman's divisional plan for Hackney was drawn up, was even more limited than the Mapledene one-

"A COPPER'S NARK ON EVERY CORNER"

The events in Mapledene Residents' Association must be seen in the wider context of Sir Kenneth Newman's policing strategy for Hackney, of which Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are just a part. The Mapledene Crime Survey might be seen as an attempt to endorse

its respondents consisted of: 9 from Residents'/tenants' associations, 2 Youth leaders, 3 Church Ministers, 4 representatives from commercial organisations, 3 from ethnic groups and 6 councillors!

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes are part of the 'Multi-Agency Approach' of Newman's strategy, which attempts to co-ordinate the police, social services and community organisations in controlling crime. Many schemes have been suggested, but only three are now in operation in Hackney: at Boscobel House, the Crown Estates and Albion Square. They operate in groups of about 200 residents, watching for strangers hanging about, strange vehicles, and callers at absent neighbours' homes: at the Mapledene AGM, such tactics were felt by one group of tenants to be 'divisive'. One police officer neatly defined neighbourhood watch as 'having a copper's nark on every corner'.

In view of these events, and of the additional powers accorded to the Police when the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill becomes Law, the work of Hackney Council's police committee and its support unit, campaigning for police accountability and improvements in police practices is extremely important. The Police Committee

Support Unit can be reached at Room 50, Hackney Town Hall, London E8 1EA. Tel: 01 986 3123 ext. 278.

Hackney Campaign Against the Police Bill can be contacted at 50, Rectory Road, N.16. Tel: 249 8334.

Newman's view of Inner City areas like Hackney: 'in some areas of Room 50, Hackney Town Hall, London extreme activists seek to represent practically any police intervention as harassment.' Mr. and Mrs. Hackney' are the norm: anyone who has trouble with the police must be extreme. Anthony Kendall, ex-leader of Hackney Council is convinced that Newman is 'dangerously unaware of the real facts of

MISTRUST

Cllr. Heaven's report also points out that although the survey is not sociologically valid, its findings do give the impression of widespread mistrust of the police in an area which might be expected to

FEAR & LOATHING IN STOKE NEWINGTON

But today the only reminder of 1983 was a line of barriers stretched across the pavement opposite the station. A Duran Duran record was belting out from behind the corrugated iron fencing that surrounds the building site.

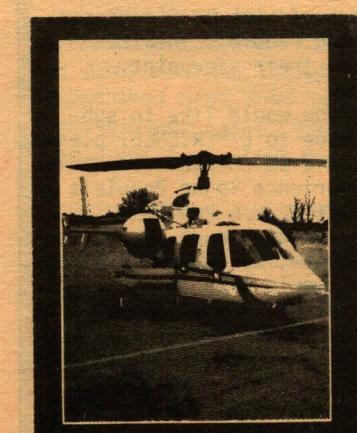
I wondered as I entered around the back whether the open day would include an exhibit in the foyer indicating where Colin Roach died. It didn't.

The station house was jam-packed with hundreds of kids, adults and...police. The Met's finest were in a festive mood, gleefully describing their procedures and equipment. One constable described with pride the station's micro electronic breathalyser. Another display by the CID showed a mock murder scene where an officer pointed out clues - just like Sherlock Holmes.

and signing autographs. I resented being part of a Police Public relations exercise.

Some of their work appeared incredibly tedious. For example during the day two constables were posted at sensitive door-ways off the staircase. I would still like to know what they were guarding?

The wierdest experience of the day came as I was inspecting one of the cells. As I took in the toilet bowl odour and tried to read graffiti that had been scratched on the grey concrete walls, the sound of another record drifted in from the outdoor disco. Three women were singing: "Free Nelson Mandela".



I was almost surprised to discover that the coppers were human beings underneath all that blue serge. They enjoyed entertaining the kids

pub of the month

From last month's mini-crawl in Stoke Newington, this month the Pub of the Month team headed south to the less trendy London Fields/Haggerston area just off Queensbridge Road.

THE ALBION

Our main pub was to be the Brownlow Arms, but we decided to meet up in the Albion Tavern, 33 Albion Drive, E8. A mistake this, for despite being nothing like a Stoke Newington wine bar it turned out to be an equally trendy disco-type pub with low ceiling and dim red lighting. The Shepherd Neame bitter at 43p a half was good if somewhat pricy. But this is not really an ale-drinkers' pub. The lighting was such that one of the researchers was found opening the front door to hold his beer up to a street light to check its colour!

THE BROWNLOW

We retreated to the Brownlow Arms just the other side of Queensbridge Road at 10 Scriven Street, E8. Only a few hundred yards, but what a contrast! An unspoilt local pub with more of a family atmosphere. The public bar has been retained and appeared lively and friendly with darts and pool in progress. Having just escaped the Albion we retreated further - into the lounge, for there were still a few unoccupied tables here.

The clientele was mainly middle aged to elderly, but we three youngsters (?) felt more at home here than in the Albion as we settled down to enjoy two pints of Charrington IPA and

a lemon and lime costing £1.98. We were so relaxed that we forgot to check out the individual prices, which must say something about the place.

MUSIC

Music was playing, but thankfully it was in the background and didn't interfere with conversations about the decor, the photos on the walls and the collection of small decorative mugs and so on.

RELAXED

The Brownlow Arms might not be the ideal place to go for that action-packed big night out, but for a quiet drink in a relaxed atmosphere, or a good session in the public bar it is worth a visit - and the more people use pubs like this, the less likely they are to be 'tarted up' out of existence into disco-pubs and wine bars.

WINE SURVEY

While on the subject of wine bars, a recent survey carried out by six London boroughs, Hackney included, showed wide variation in the price and quantity of a glass of wine.



EXPERIENCE THE NEWS

Theatre has always had an air of snobbery about it, but Hackney's theatre has often claimed to be honest and robust. A theatre where people say what they think and groups respond to need. Community Theatre Arts in particular sets itself up as the "theatre of the people", but is that true?

How for example, do young people view what goes on in the Community Theatre Arts world? Well now you can find out, because Experience Young People's Theatre are about to launch their latest venture: EXPERIENCE--the News-sheet.

This Bi-Monthly, four page newsheet will be written and edited by young people from Hackney, and include items about Community Theatre Arts in London as well as news of work by Experience Young People's Theatre--from their viewpoint.

If you would like to subscribe to EXPERIENCE, please send a £3 cheque to: Experience Young People's Theatre, c/o Rob West, 96 Fellows Court, Weymouth Terrace, E2 8LN. Also if you would like to become involved in the project, drop Rob a line and he'll tell you how. The first issue of the EXPERIENCE newsletter is due out in June.

WIGAN PIER REVISITED

MEETING EXAMINED MOOD OF WORKERS

In case anyone thought that George Orwell had been done to death this year, he cropped up again at the Stoke Newington Communist Party meeting on Tuesday 22nd May, when Beatrix Campbell, who is a member of the Stoke Newington branch, was there to talk about her new book, 'Wigan Pier Revisited'.

George Orwell published 'The Road to Wigan Pier' in 1937: it is an account of the journey of an Upper Class journalist into the world of The Other Class during the Great Depression. Beatrix Campbell undertook a revised version of the same journey to Barnsley and Wigan, but added to the list Coventry, a 'cleaned up' new town, a 'city of immigrants' (most of the towns she visited had a largely white population), and, from her own part of the country, the far north, Sunderland, which has been in industrial decline for decades. She also added to the journey the fact that she, unlike George Orwell, is working class and a feminist.

She spoke a great deal about the problems of writing in the tradition of English 'journeys into poverty'. As one of the women in whose home she stayed asked: 'Is (the book) going to be for us as well as about us?' She faces the contradiction that although she herself felt isolated and dependent on the people she stayed with on her journey, and identified with them to a greater extent than George Orwell did (his descriptions are always of his reactions - disgust, repulsion, pity etc.), and attempted not to suppress the mediating voice, the representative who showed her the lives of the people

she was writing about, the book costs £4.50 to most of the people who feature in it.

However, unlike Orwell, Beatrix Campbell tried to resist the search for the quintessential worker: the image of the miner as a figure of tragic pity or the heroic worker has pervaded not only Orwell's writings, but many other areas of left politics. The support and organisation round the miners at the moment, for instance, is a great deal more concerted than it was for dinner ladies or health service workers, as a questioner at the meeting pointed out. 'Wigan Pier Revisited' attempts to displace and redraw the categories of the Labour Movement, in its insistence on female as well as male class identity, and by pointing out that in a town where a Labour authority is in control and levies both financial and political rent, the most dispossessed members of the working class are hardly going to identify with the politics of the Labour movement.

Beatrix Campbell says that if she reads another sentence beginning 'The Left must recognise', she's going to scream. However, the mood at the meeting was one of open questioning, of revising and revisiting long held categories many of which have come into everyday language from the Orwellian tradition - without throwing overboard facts such as the existence of class. In that sense, 'Wigan Pier Revisited' is a book that the Left does seem to be recognising.

There will be an interview with Beatrix Campbell in the next issue of HPP.

Mr Pepys at 28 Mare St was the cheapest, charging 5.2p per cl, while Reno's, at 239 Mare Street, was the highest of the six places investigated in Hackney, at 7p per cl. These prices are based on house white wine, which of course can vary from quite good to pretty poor.

Beer and spirits are sold in standard measures which make price comparisons easy, so why not wine too? The brewing trade has in fact just introduced a voluntary code of practice which calls for standard measures and the clear displaying of quantity and price, but will any such voluntary code work?

But why stop here? Why don't British pubs display notices in the window indicating their opening hours, drinks and prices? On the continent it is common - you can make up your mind whether to pay the price before going in, or deciding to go elsewhere. You know too what time to come back if it looks good but is closed at the time. It can't just be us that end up outside pubs that open 30 minutes later than everyone else or get pissed off with being over-charged. The good establishments have nothing to lose by displaying this information - let's hope they lead the way.

JOB FOR A CHANGE

FESTIVAL

MISTY IN ROOTS

THE SMITHS

HANK WANGFORD

SUNDAY

JUNE
10th

JUBILEE GARDENS
SOUTH BANK,
COUNTY HALL,

keep
GLC
Working for London

REVIEW

Performance arts

BLACK ART GALLERY

"Performers" by Ben Nusha and Marc Boothe.

The exhibition catalogue states that Ben Nusha and Marc Boothe "have devoted many hours of work and thought to the perfection of their chosen means of communication." This care and attention is confirmed by the display of two excellent sets of work.

Marc Boothe's photography is particularly impressive, capturing the very essence and spirit of his subjects. The "Four Temperaments" (10 photos) bestows on dance and movement a respect and appreciation of the dancer's grace, strength and control that usually escapes the lens. As sinews strain you feel yourself compelled to trace the next anticipated sequence across the gallery floor.

After the dancers are the musicians. The enlightened soul of Ray Charles is projected out through a trio of orange tinted shades, inviting you into the great man's blues. The flaming gold of Wayne Shorter's sax burns with the energy that Shorter injects into his music. My personal favorite is the humble resonance of Abdullah Ibrahim, swamped by an open piano, seeking inspiration, yet paradoxically emanating a strength to all others. In a similar vein to this is Lester Bowie, framed by two magnificent vocalists, Fontella Bass and David Pearce. Finally there are two photographs of Marvin Gaye. One reflects the

inner turmoil that Gaye suffered in the 70s, the other sees him arm aloft, spine arched backwards in a gesture of envisaged (and with hindsight tragic) freedom.

Accompanying these are equally impressive metal sculptures by Ben Nusha. The process of production, heating steel until molten before dripping it into place, invites unrestrained admiration. With great patience an individual sculpture takes months to complete. "String Operator" shows the craft at its best. It served as a pean to the late Jimi Hendrix and as a timely reminder of the 'undiscovered' blues players who have seen their style pilfered by white copyists who ran off with the money and glory. "Tribal Dancer" is a perfect complement to Boothe's photos with its twisting and exaggerated torso again depicting the dancer's bodily limitations to the full. In the end is the teak sculptured good-bye, its mangled shape at once a farewell and a plea for more (money? recognition? hope?) liberation?

The exhibition was extended until June 3, so there is no excuse for missing it. Out of context it is a marvellous collection of what can be expressed in art. More importantly it is an inspiration to other black artists of the achievement of others, and an appreciation of what those achievements have been worth.

CLIFFORD SALT

LINK SNAPPED

Continued from page 1.
Linkline service, only be half-hourly, and will not run on Sundays.

This is in comparison to the Richmond - Broad Street trains which (for the moment) run every 20 minutes, seven days a week.

The diversion and the closures must be opposed, and there is little time left in which to do this. First, objections should be sent to the Transport Users Consultative Committee for London at 3-4 Great Marlborough Street

London W1V 2EA. This must be done by June 29. This body is empowered to hold a hearing into hardship or inconvenience caused by closures, and letters to them should state how useful the line presently is, and how inconvenient the closure will prove.

Second, since it is the diversion of the line which is paving the way for BR to close the Dalston Junction-Broad Street section, and it is the GLC who are paying £10 million to finance it, the people of Hackney need

to let the GLC know that we do not appreciate their efforts to destroy what little public transport we have in the borough. Letters should be sent to GLC councillors, and to Dave Wetzel, chair of the transport committee, at County Hall, opposing the GLC's policy on diverting the North London Line to North Woolwich.

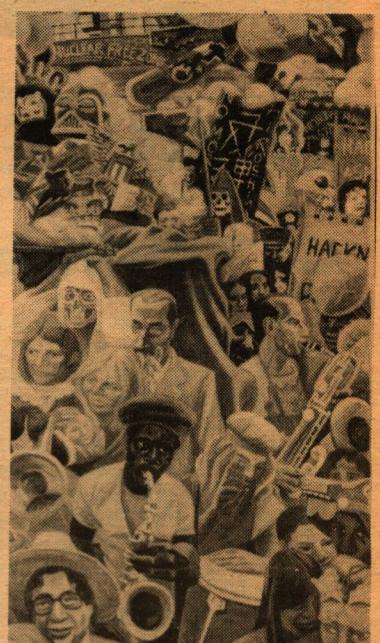
There will be a public meeting on Thursday 14th June to discuss the closures. This is at 7pm at St Marks Church Hall, Colvestone Crescent, E8.

Further information from Anthony Kent, HPTAC, 380 Old Street, EC1 (739 5137)

ARTIST DIES

Peace campaigners in Hackney and throughout London were shocked to hear of the sudden death last month of Ray Walker, who had just completed the designs for the Dalston Lane Peace Mural, on which work on painting was just about to start.

The last issue of HPP showed the full design for the mural (a detail of which is shown above). The aim of the London Muralists for Peace Group and Hackney CND is that the work should



be completed as far as possible in accordance with Ray's wishes, as a tribute to an artist and a campaigner for peace.



DAY OF ACTION

Strength of conviction carried protesters through the day of action on 26 May - wet, cold and dismal as it was.

The day began in Hackney with a colourful motocade, of cars and a lorry decked out with an effigy of St. Leonard's hospital. This travelled round to the three Hackney hospitals threatened with closure. At each a 'cheque' was presented to hospital workers. This represented a share of the

£5.8m it takes to run the three hospitals for a year - and which Hackney CND had calculated it costs to run trident for just three weeks.

Hackney's procession joined up with the Barking hospital workers, who have been on strike for three months over privatisation, and with Barts' domestic staff.

The whole rally, with demonstrators from all over London, met up at St. George's at Hyde Park Corner - first victim of the cuts. Turnout, despite the weather, was remarkably good.

Maternity Care

The District Health Authority at its April meeting agreed to centralise obstetric services at the Homerton Hospital. That a decision of this magnitude should be nodded through must stand as a comment on the services provided at Barts for the community. It also reflects in part some members' disgust at the arguments used by consultants for the retention of the unit.

Dinah Morley, one of Hackney's representatives, asked that the unacceptability of some of these arguments should be noted, in particular the argument on anaesthetics. It was suggested that anaesthetics would be better organised if maternity services were on two sites. For 7 years members have been told of the difficulties of providing anaesthetic services on more than one site.

The other arguments, made by M E Setchell on behalf of the Department of Obstetrics gave the strong suggestion that the status and location of Barts were more important

than the quality of service provided to women. Ms Morley commented that these kinds of objections clearly demonstrated just where the consultant's interests lay. Tony Dawson, Consultant Member of the District Management Team, said he found the objections to the closure unacceptable because they implied we should have two standards of care--one for Hackney and one for Barts.

The CHC Women's Group will continue to press for maternity services to be brought out into the community--for antenatal care away from hospitals, for a consultant to be given responsibility for developing the service in health centres and with GPs, and for more midwives to be appointed. If these developments take place with sufficient commitment and monitoring of the service, we believe that women will benefit by having the main hospital unit at the Homerton.

(From CHC Newsletter)

The alternative press is alive and well, and enjoying a growing readership. This was the message from 15 alternative papers, with a combined readership of 60,000, who met in Leeds during April.

To underline this point, an Alternative Press Network was established to create a national voice for the growing numbers of local independent radical newspapers that exist around the country.

There was a clear feeling at the conference that alternative press was not being taken seriously enough--either for its ability in newsgathering, or

for its capacity to reach large numbers of people. One major function of the Network will be to enable the rapid exchange of information, and the redirecting of selected local news items to the national press.

The Alternative Press network will also compile a directory of the alternative papers, represent papers to potential national advertisers, provide a cuttings service, and offer advice and support to new local papers. It will, in effect, be setting up an alternative "Press Association" and advertising agency. HPP will be taking an active part in the network.

Alternative News

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative non-profit making monthly newspaper produced by an open group of people who live or work in Hackney. We publish the paper because we believe that Hackney needs an alternative to the commercial press to serve the real interests of its people. We have no editor and no shareholders, and no one is paid by the paper.

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